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ABSTRACT

Nationalism and worldmindedness are social cognitions that have both culture-unique and culture-universal aspects. To compare cross-cultural manifestations of these 2 sentiments, 270 Japanese and 210 American university students in Tokyo and Los Angeles answered questions on national resources, self-sufficiency and interdependence, communication, global priorities, world government, and war. Japanese and Americans were chosen for this comparison because while both countries are technological, affluent societies, they differ in geopolitical status, degree of global interdependence, and societal makeup. Findings revealed that nationalistic feelings coexisted with worldmindedness in both groups but that their different manifestations reflected national political and social realities. For example, although both groups valued the United Nations and war prevention efforts, more Japanese expressed identity with a global community while more Americans felt that war was inevitable. Also, although both groups expressed love of country, Americans put stronger emphasis on fighting for their country right or wrong. The strong showing of worldmindedness by Japanese is explained by World War II and its aftermath--the effects of Hiroshima, demilitarization, and resource dependence. The paper includes a tabulation of survey results. (LP)

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NATIONALISM AND WORLDMINDEDNESS: JAPANESE VERSUS AMERICAN COMPARISON

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NATIONALISM AND WORLDMINDEDNESS: JAPANESE VERSUS AMERICAN COMPARISON

Aghop Der-Karabetian, Bill Shang, and Nancy Hsu

The world had indeed shrunk! The technology of suprasonic travel and instantaneous communication have made everyone next-door neighbors, and have helped evolve an awareness of issues concerning all of humankind. The overwhelming majority of people around the world understand today that human society encompasses the entire globe. This understanding is a phenomenon no less important than the understanding that the globe is round rather than flat. Three major historical processes have propelled humankind toward global community: The ideology of equalitarianism, the explosion of technological and scientific knowledge, and economic interdependence. These processes have, slowly but surely, eroded the notion that all human and social problems can most effectively be resolved through a world-order system constituted exclusively by governments of sovereign nation-states.

Increasingly, we have seen the formation of intergovern-mental and supranational actors to address issues of global concern. We have seen the development of basic technologies universally applicable in the fields of medicine, communication engineering, data processing and organizational management. We have also seen the world from space with no lines of demarcation! Such experiences have come together to create a new awareness of the oneness of humanity; a sentiment that transcends national boundaries; a state of mind that has been termed worldmindedness.

Worldmindedness is seen as a different cognition than internationalism. Internationalism is essentially characterized by knowledge, interest, and direct or indirect involvement in international issues and relations. Worldmindedness, on the other hand, is characterized essentially as a sentiment and a value orientation. Although internationalism and worldmindedness may not be totally independent concepts their differentiation may be a valuable tool for investigation. Very few social and behavioral scientists have carried out empirical studies comparing nationalism and worldmindedness. Those that exist are mostly 20 or 30 years old, and do not address many issues that are relevant today. Also, there has been an inherent assumption in these studies that internationalism or worldmindedness are diametrically opposite concepts to nationalism. Furthermore, cross-cultural perspectives on this matter are sorely lacking. The great majority of recent studies have dealt with the impact of foreign travel or study on worldmindedness or global awareness. The results have been mostly inconclusive, probably due to lack of a clear understanding of the concept, and the absence of a valid instrument (Questionnaire) to measure it.

Worldmindedness is a pervasive social cognition. It is pan-cultural and should be studied as such. It is also a culture-bound phenomenon. Different nations and peoples of the world experience the world somewhat differently because of the unique ways they are related to the rest of it.

Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that worldmindedness as a social cognition has culture-unique and culture-universal aspects to it. Similarly, nationalism too may be assumed to have culture-unique and culture-universal aspects. Thus, a better understanding of these cognitions and their implications would necessarily involve cross-cultural comparisons. As a preliminary step in this direction, a survey was conducted comparing the attitudes and opinions of a group of Japanese and American young people.

The Japanese and American societies are particulary interesting to compare because of the various ways they are similar and different. For instance, while both are highly advanced technologically one is culturally homogeneous and the other diversified; while they are competitors in the world market place, their geopolitical status in the community of nation-states is quite different. While both countries enjoy a high standard of living, their dependence on other countries for necessary resources vary widely. Given such similarities and differences in the circumstances of the two countries, nationalism and worldmindedness may show interesting manifestations.

To explore the various manifestations of the sentiments of nationalism and worldmindedness, a special questionnaire was prepared. It dealt with issues of natural resources, self-sufficiency, communication, intermarriage, global priorities, interdependence, cooperation, world government and war. All together, there were 32 statements written

originally in English. The Japanese translation was developed using appropriate procedures. The questionnaire was distributed to college students in the Los Angeles and Tokyo areas, who filled them out in various classroom settings. In the Japanese sample, there were 122 females and 148 males for a total of 270; and in the American sample, there were 111 females and 99 males for a total of 210. Although these samples may not be necessarily representative of their respective cultures or student populations, their responses may provide interesting insights about the sentiments of nationalism and worldmindedness of a future generation of Japanese and American leaders.

Table 1 summarizes the responses of the two groups. It shows the percentage of Japanese and American students who agree with each of the statements. Examination of the consensus of the two groups on the various items reveals interesting patterns. In certain ways, the Japanese and the Americans are similar in the manifiestation of their worldminded attitudes.

Both reflect a global humanism and express respect for people in general, irrespective of their nationality or citizenship (Items 6, 11 and 32). There is a strong consensus among the Japanese and the Americans on the need and the possibility of preventing war and nuclear confrontation (Items 8, 18 and 21). The Japanese, however, are more strongly in favor of not allowing any country to possess nuclear weapons (Item 8), and more Americans believe that war is inevitable in a world of crowded nations (Item 13). The majority in both groups do not look favorably on the exclusive possession of armaments by any international police force (Item 19).

The great majority of both the Japanese and the Americans agree that the United Nations must be preserved at all costs (Item 1), and that national boundaries create artificial barriers between the peoples of the world (Item 23). On the other hand, there is a clear recognition that countries in the United Nations tend to pursue their own interests rather than the interests of the world as a whole (Item 28). This is coupled with the belief that the world will never be possible to fuse into a single large political entity (Item 20). Another interesting point in this respect, is that although there is no strong support in both for creating and teaching an international language (Item 29), there is a strong consensus about teaching world citizenship in schools around the world (Item 9).

Thus, the sentiment of worldmindedness appears to have certain common features among the Japanese and the American college students. It seems to be focused on values of global humanism, the need to prevent nuclear war, and a conditional faith in the United Nations. The idea of teaching global citizenship is also appealing.

Along with the similarities, there are perceptible differences in the global awareness of the Japanese and the American college students. The Japanese seem to feel a stronger identity with the global community. There is a greater tendency among the Japanese to feel that they are first citizens of the world then citizens of their country (Item 22).

They also endorse more strongly the view that the entire globe should be seen as one big country (Item 25). The Japanese college students appear to have a greater tendency to put the interest of the world above the interest of their country (Items 4, 5, 10 and 17).

Insert Table 1 about here

The Japanese college students are more acutely aware of the interdependent nature of the world. They have a stronger belief in the need to share the resources of the world more equitably (Item 2), and tend to disapprove of taking advantage of national resources regardless of its impact on other countries (Item 26). Also, the Japanese are much less enthusiastic about endorsing efforts by nations to strive for self-sufficiency (Item 7), although they recognize that this is not out of the reach of some countries (Item 14).

Parallel to sentiments of worldmindedness, elements of nationalism are also present. Both Japanese and American college students strongly endorse the notion that loving one's country does not preclude being kindly towards others (Item 32). There appears to be a conditional element in this attitude. There is a greater tendency among the Japanese to uphold the welfare of other countries only if it is in the best interest of their own country (Item 30). While both find the inter-marriage of races until there is one race rather disagreeable (Item 27), fewer Japanese endorse the idea that people of different countries are more similar than different (Item 3).

However, the Japanese group is much less willing to support their country "right or wrong" than their American counterparts (Item 31). This difference in nationalistic sentiment is also apparent in the greater endorsement by the Americans of the need to maintain national boundaries (Item 15) and the willingness to fight for them (Item 16).

Responses on several of the items reflect the impact of Japan's homogeneous and America's heterogeneous social structure. There is stronger consensus among the American students that people of different countries are more similar than different (Item 3). Also, fewer Americans agree that cultures will always have a hard time communicating (Item 12). Furthermore, there is a greater tendency among the Japanese to insist that people who visit their country speak their language (Item 24), which can also be considered a reflection of their nationalistic sentiments.

On the whole, it is apparent that nationalistic sentiments are coextensive with attitudes and opinions that reflect a global awareness and worldmindedness. While this is true for both the Japanese and the American groups, the manifestation of these sentiments comprise somewhat different elements that reflect the geopolitical and social realities of the two societies.

The strong showing of global awareness and worldmindedness among the Japanese may be somewhat surprising at first glance, given the fierce nationalism displayed by the Japanese during the first half of this century (and before) and the tightly knit homogeneous society of Japan bound by centuries of tradition. Some light may be thrown on this matter by looking

at several factors. The participants in this survey were college students who were born and raised in the post-war era when Japan began to open up to the west and to the rest of the world.

The fact that Japan was not allowed to develop a large-scale military force of its own may have contributed to the growth of global awareness in more than one way. Military service by young people which normally generates nationalistic sentiments was largely absent. The unavailability of a complete military option for geopolitical strategy led Japan to develop greater sensitivity toward their neighbors and the rest of the world.

The manifestation of strong worldmindedness by the Japanese should also be viewed in the context of the experience of Hiroshima and its aftermath which created an awareness of the vulnerability of all humanity and helped raise global consciousness. The anti-nuclear movement that has grown in the last few years in Japan and around the world has reinforced the sentiment of worldmindedness and global consciousness.

Finally, the oil embargo of 1972 drove home to the average citizen in Japan (and to all of the western countries, for that matter) the interdependence of nations on a global level. Japan with its limited energy resources was specially sensitized to the need for global cooperation in solving the various problems and emerging demands of expanding societies.

There is no question that nationalism is a strong driving fforce in the world today and will be around for a long time

to come. It is apparent that a new and equally powerful sentiment is rapidly emerging in the form of global awareness and worldmindedness. It is gaining force with great momentum and is bringing with itself a strong sense of urgency. Japan with its conspicuous role in the international arena and its well-rooted sense of culture and tradition, is in a unique position to contribute to the reconciliation of the forces of nationalism and worldmindedness.

Table 1

Percentage of agreement responses to each item by Japanese and U.S. college students

	Japanese n=270 %	U.S. n=210 %
1. The United Nations must be preserved at all cost.	95	90
2. Resources of the world must be shared equally by all peoples.	88	71
3. People of different countries are more similar than different	43	61
4. My country is no better than many others.	62	30
5. By serving the interest of my people, I serve the interest of all people.	19	41
6. I respect no other peoples like I do the people of my country.	17	19
7. Every nation should strive for complete self-sufficiency.	39	76
8. No country should be allowed to possess nuclear weapons.	94	81
9. World citizenship should be taught in all schools around the globe.	94	85
10. Loyalty to one's country should come before commitment to world brotherhood.	25	50
11. People are equally important no matter what citizenship they have.	96	96
12. People of different cultures will always have a hard time communicating.	86	51
13. War is inevitable in a world of crowded nations.	23	55
14. All countries of the world are hopelessly interdependent.	38	57

Table 1 (Continued)

		Japanese	U.S.
15.	National boundaries must be preserved at any cost.	27	53
16.	People must be willing to fight to maintain their culture and heritage.	32	64
17.	No duties are more important than duties towards one's country.	14	40
18.	Certain rights are worth sacrificing to avoid war.	75	78
19.	The only group allowed to have armaments should be an international police force.	39	33
20.	Countries of the world will never be possible to fuse into a single large political entity.	84	75
21.	Nuclear war is possible to prevent.	83	88
22.	First I am a citizen of the world, then a citizen of my country.	83	53
23.	National boundaries create artificial barriers between the people of the world.	72	76
24.	People who visit our country should learn to speak our language.	65	48
25.	The entire globe should be viewed as one big country.	86	62
26.	Each country must take maximum advantage of its own resources regardless of its impact on other countries.	28	38
27.	All races should intermarry until there is one race.	12	13
28.	Countries in the U.N. pursue their own interests.	82	64
29.	An international language must be created and taught.	39	46

Table 1 (Continued)

		Japanese	U.S.
30.	We should uphold the welfare of other countries only if it is in the best interest of our country.	58	42
31.	I am for my country, right or wrong.	5	34
32.	The fact that I love my country does not make me feel less kindly toward other countries.	96	92